

Education and Workforce Development Cabinet

State ready to accept claims for extended unemployment benefits

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FRANKFORT, Ky. – Education and Workforce Development Secretary Helen Mountjoy today announced that Kentucky is now prepared to accept claims for extended unemployment benefits. The state has activated an Extended Benefits period triggering the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) to fund up to an additional 20 weeks of unemployment insurance. This compensation is for Kentucky workers who otherwise would have exhausted their benefits.

Last month, Gov. Steve Beshear signed an emergency regulation to allow the additional unemployment compensation for eligible Kentuckians based on the Total Unemployment Rate criterion (TUR) recommended by the federal government. Since that time, staff at the Office of Employment and Training has received guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor on how best to implement the new program. Upgraded technology and necessary information is now in place to begin accepting claims for extended benefits.

“In this tough economic climate, we must take advantage of available resources that will assist the state’s unemployed workers.” Gov. Beshear said. “This additional compensation will help them endure these challenging times as we all work together to put Kentuckians back to work.”

The Extended Benefits Program provides up to 20 additional weeks of federally-funded unemployment insurance to workers who have exhausted their 26 weeks of benefits through the state and the

additional 33 weeks provided through the federal emergency extensions approved by Congress.

The Office of Employment and Training, located in Kentucky's Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, is in the process of identifying and notifying by mail all individuals who are potentially eligible, including those who may be retroactively eligible, for the new benefits. The notifications include further information on how to apply and the requirements of these benefits. Details are also available at <http://oet.ky.gov/>.

Eligible claimants may now file online at <https://uiclaims.des.ky.gov/ebenefit/> and should start receiving checks for extended benefits within three weeks. Eligible claimants will receive payments retroactive to Feb. 22, 2009, or their date of federal emergency unemployment compensation exhaustion, whichever is later.

Federal work-search requirements are more stringent for the Extended Benefits Program. In order to qualify, claimants must document their job searches and must seek work through personal contact on at least two days of the week. Claimants cannot duplicate their contacts. Failure to look for work or refusing suitable work offered may disqualify claimants from receiving benefits.

The Extended Benefits Program is normally funded 50 percent from the state Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund and 50 percent from the federal unemployment fund. However, as a result of the Recovery Act, federal funding will cover 100 percent of the costs.

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The Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet coordinates learning programs from P-16 and manages and supports training and employment functions in the Department for Workforce Investment. For more information, go to www.educationcabinet.ky.gov or www.workforce.ky.gov.